

What is Claimed is:

1 1. An active user registry system responsive to a
2 request for communications contact information
3 corresponding to a user, comprising:
4 a. a computer; and
5 b. a database, linked to the computer,
6 containing communications information for contacting the
7 user including a user identifier, a plurality of
8 communications addresses and information corresponding
9 to the user's preferred communications options;
10 wherein the system determines a communications
11 address for contacting the user in accordance with a
12 comparison between a communications option accompanying
13 the request and the user's preferred communications
14 options.

1 2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 user identifier includes information representing at
3 least one of the user's identity, the user's title, the
4 user's occupation or personal information corresponding
5 to the user.

1 3. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses includes an
3 address for contacting the user by telephone, an address
4 for contacting the user by e-mail, an address for
5 contacting the user by facsimile, and a current address
6 for making direct communications contact with the user.

1 4. The system according to claim 3, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by videophone.

1 5. The system according to claim 3, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by voice messaging.

1 6. The system according to claim 3, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by real-time IP
4 messaging.

1 7. The system according to claim 3, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes a
3 URL-compatible address for linking to a Web page
4 associated with the user.

1 8. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes a communications option
4 and at least one of the time of day, the day of the
5 week, or information representing the identity of a
6 person attempting to contact the user.

1 9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes information received
4 over a communications link from a personal information
5 source associated with the user.

1 10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 communications address for contacting the user
3 determined by the system corresponds to a communications
4 option having at least one communications property in
5 common with the communications option accompanying the

1 available voice-compatible communication interface.

1 18. The system according to claim 1, further
2 comprising a cache coupled to the database for storing
3 information, for a particular subscriber, corresponding
4 to an entry point to communications information for
5 contacting the user stored in the database.

1 19. The system according to claim 18, wherein the
2 information stored in the cache for a particular
3 subscriber is updated in accordance with a pattern of
4 communications options utilized over time by the
5 subscriber upon access to the database.

1 20. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 communications information for contacting the user is
3 automatically updated in accordance with a change in a
4 communications address for contacting the user.

1 21. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 user may, subject to verification of the user's
3 identity, update the communications information for
4 contacting the user.

1 22. The system according to claim 1, wherein
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options is automatically learned in
4 accordance with how the user interacts with
5 communication attempts from other persons.

1 23. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 database further includes a message providing
3 information about contacting the user.

1 24. The system according to claim 23, wherein the
2 message providing information about contacting the user
3 includes an audio message.

1 25. The system according to claim 23, wherein the
2 database further includes a list identifying those
3 persons entitled to access the message providing
4 information about contacting the user.

1 26. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 database further includes multimedia information
3 corresponding to the user.

1 27. The system according to claim 26, multimedia
2 information corresponding to the user includes a Web
3 page.

1 28. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
2 system is linked to at least one of a packet network and
3 a telephone network.

1 29. The system according to claim 28, wherein the
2 packet network comprises at least one of the Internet or
3 an intranet.

1 30. The system according to claim 28, wherein the
2 system is further linked to a Web site for accessing the
3 system using a Web browser.

1 31. An active user registry system responsive to a
2 request for communications contact information

1 corresponding to a user, comprising:
2 a. a computer; and
3 b. a database, linked to the computer,
4 containing communications information for contacting the
5 user including a user identifier, a plurality of
6 communications addresses and information corresponding
7 to the user's preferred communications options;
8 wherein information corresponding to the
9 user's preferred communications options is automatically
10 learned in accordance with how the user interacts with
11 communication attempts from other persons.

1 32. The system according to claim 31, wherein the
2 user identifier includes information representing at
3 least one of the user's identity, the user's title, the
4 user's occupation or personal information corresponding
5 to the user.

1 33. The system according to claim 31, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses includes an
3 address for contacting the user by telephone, an address
4 for contacting the user by e-mail, an address for
5 contacting the user by facsimile, and a current address
6 for making direct communications contact with the user.

1 34. The system according to claim 33, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by videophone.

1 35. The system according to claim 33, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by voice messaging.

1 36. The system according to claim 33, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by real-time IP
4 messaging.

1 37. The system according to claim 33, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes a
3 URL-compatible address for linking to a Web page
4 associated with the user.

1 38. The system according to claim 31, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes a communications option
4 and at least one of the time of day, the day of the
5 week, or information representing the identity of a
6 person attempting to contact the user.

1 39. The system according to claim 31, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes information received
4 over a communications link from a personal information
5 source associated with the user.

1 40. The system according to claim 31, further
2 comprising a voice interface for enabling interaction
3 with, and control and management of, the system from any
4 available voice-compatible communication interface.

1 41. The system according to claim 31, further
2 comprising a cache coupled to the database for storing
3 information, for a particular subscriber, corresponding
4 to an entry point to communications information for
5 contacting the user stored in the database.

1 42. The system according to claim 41, wherein the
2 information stored in the cache for a particular
3 subscriber is updated in accordance with a pattern of
4 communications options utilized over time by the
5 subscriber upon access to the database.

1 43. An active user registry system responsive to a
2 request for communications contact information
3 corresponding to a user, comprising:
4 a. a computer; and
5 b. a database, linked to the computer,
6 containing communications information for contacting the
7 user including a user identifier, a plurality of
8 communications addresses and information corresponding
9 to the user's preferred communications options;
10 wherein the information corresponding to the
11 user's preferred communications options includes
12 information received over a communications link from a
13 personal information source associated with the user.

1 44. A method of operating an active user registry
2 service accessible over a communications network,
3 comprising the steps of:
4 a. receiving a request for communications
5 contact information corresponding to a user;
6 b. searching a database containing
7 communications information for contacting the user
8 including a user identifier, a plurality of
9 communications addresses and information corresponding
10 to the user's preferred communications options; and
11 c. determining a communications address for
12 contacting the user in accordance with a comparison

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13 between a communications option accompanying the request
14 and the user's preferred communications options.

1 45. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 communications network includes at least one of a packet
3 network and a telephone network.

1 46. The method according to claim 45, wherein the
2 packet network comprises at least one of the Internet or
3 an intranet.

1 47. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 service is further accessible through a Web site using a
3 Web browser.

1 48. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 user identifier includes information representing at
3 least one of the user's identity, the user's title, the
4 user's occupation or personal information corresponding
5 to the user.

1 49. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses includes an
3 address for contacting the user by telephone, an address
4 for contacting the user by e-mail, an address for
5 contacting the user by facsimile, and a current address
6 for making direct communications contact with the user.

1 50. The method according to claim 49, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by videophone.

1 51. The method according to claim 49, wherein the

- 2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
- 3 an address for contacting the user by voice messaging.

- 1 52. The method according to claim 49, wherein the
- 2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
- 3 an address for contacting the user by real-time IP
- 4 messaging.

- 1 53. The method according to claim 49, wherein the
- 2 plurality of communications addresses further includes a
- 3 URL-compatible address for linking to a Web page
- 4 associated with the user.

- 1 54. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
- 2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
- 3 communications options includes a communications option
- 4 and at least one of the time of day, the day of the
- 5 week, or information representing the identity of a
- 6 person attempting to contact the user.

- 1 55. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
- 2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
- 3 communications options includes information received
- 4 over a communications link from a personal information
- 5 source associated with the user.

- 1 56. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
- 2 determined communications address for contacting the
- 3 user corresponds to a communications option having at
- 4 least one communications property in common with the
- 5 communications option accompanying the request and with
- 6 the user's preferred communications options.

1 57. The method according to claim 44, further
2 comprising the step of converting a communication for
3 the user into a form receivable by the user over at
4 least one of the user's preferred communications
5 options.

1 58. The method according to claim 57, further
2 comprising the step of delivering the converted
3 communication to the user.

1 59. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting text portions of a facsimile message into a
6 voice message.

1 60. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting an e-mail message into a voice message.

1 61. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting a voice message into a facsimile message.

1 62. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes

5 converting an e-mail message into a facsimile message.

1 63. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting text portions of a facsimile message into an
6 e-mail message.

1 64. The method according to claim 57, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting a voice message into an e-mail message.

1 65. The method according to claim 44, further
2 comprising the step of after determining a
3 communications address for contacting the user,
4 providing over the communications network the determined
5 communications address.

1 66. The method according to claim 44, further
2 comprising the step of after determining a
3 communications address for contacting the user,
4 initiating a communications contact to the determined
5 communications address.

1 67. The method according to claim 66, wherein the
2 communications contact to the user is initiated without
3 providing the communications address to a subscriber
4 making the request.

1 68. The method according to claim 44, further

- 2 comprising the step of receiving a message to be
- 3 delivered to the determined communications address.

1 69. The method according to claim 68, wherein the
2 message to be delivered comprises at least one of a
3 voice message or a text message.

1 70. The method according to claim 44, further
2 comprising the provision of a voice interface for
3 enabling interaction with, and control and management
4 of, the service from any available voice-compatible
5 communication interface.

1 71. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 step of receiving a request for a communications address
3 for contacting the user includes the step of retrieving
4 from a cache maintained for a subscriber information
5 corresponding to an entry point to communications
6 information for contacting the user stored in the
7 database.

1 72. The method according to claim 71, wherein the
2 information stored in the cache maintained for a
3 subscriber is updated in accordance with a pattern of
4 communications options utilized over time by the
5 subscriber upon access to the database.

1 73. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 communications information for contacting the user is
3 automatically updated in accordance with a change in a
4 communications address for contacting the user.

1 74. The method according to claim 44, wherein the

2 user may, subject to verification of the user's
3 identity, update the communications information for
4 contacting the user.

1 75. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options is automatically learned in
4 accordance with how the user interacts with
5 communication attempts from other persons.

1 76. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 database further includes a message providing
3 information about contacting the user.

1 77. The method according to claim 76, wherein the
2 message providing information about contacting the user
3 includes an audio message.

1 78. The method according to claim 76, wherein the
2 database further includes a list identifying those
3 persons entitled to access the message providing
4 information about contacting the user.

1 79. The method according to claim 76, further
2 comprising the step of playing the message providing
3 information about contacting the user in response to the
4 request for user contact information.

1 80. The method according to claim 44, wherein the
2 database further includes multimedia information
3 corresponding to the user.

1 81. The method according to claim 80, multimedia

2 information corresponding to the user includes a Web
3 page.

1 82. A method of operating an active user registry
2 service accessible over a communications network,
3 comprising the steps of:

4 a. receiving a request for communications
5 contact information corresponding to a user;

6 b. searching a database containing
7 communications information for contacting the user
8 including a user identifier, a plurality of
9 communications addresses and information corresponding
10 to the user's preferred communications options;
11 wherein the user's preferred
12 communications options are automatically learned in
13 accordance with how the user interacts to communications
14 from other persons; and
15 c. determining from the database a
16 communications address for contacting the user.

1 83. The method according to claim 82, wherein the
2 user identifier includes information representing at
3 least one of the user's identity, the user's title, the
4 user's occupation or personal information corresponding
5 to the user.

1 84. The method according to claim 82, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses includes an
3 address for contacting the user by telephone, an address
4 for contacting the user by e-mail, an address for
5 contacting the user by facsimile, and a current address
6 for making direct communications contact with the user.

1 85. The method according to claim 84, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by videophone.

1 86. The method according to claim 84, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by voice messaging.

1 87. The method according to claim 84, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes
3 an address for contacting the user by real-time IP
4 messaging.

1 88. The method according to claim 84, wherein the
2 plurality of communications addresses further includes a
3 URL-compatible address for linking to a Web page
4 associated with the user.

1 89. The method according to claim 82, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes at least one of the time
4 of day, the day of the week, or information representing
5 the identity of a person attempting to contact the user.

1 90. The method according to claim 82, wherein the
2 information corresponding to the user's preferred
3 communications options includes information received
4 over a communications link from a personal information
5 source associated with the user.

1 91. The method according to claim 82, further
2 comprising the provision of a voice interface for

- 3 enabling interaction with, and control and management
- 4 of, the service from any available voice-compatible
- 5 communication interface.

1 92. The method according to claim 82, wherein the
2 step of receiving a request for a communications address
3 for contacting the user includes the step of retrieving
4 from a cache maintained for a subscriber information
5 corresponding to an entry point to communications
6 information for contacting the user stored in the
7 database.

1 93. The method according to claim 92, wherein the
2 information stored in the cache maintained for a
3 subscriber is updated in accordance with a pattern of
4 communications options utilized over time by the
5 subscriber upon access to the database.

1 94. A method of operating an active user registry
2 service accessible over a communications network,
3 comprising the steps of:

4 a. receiving a request for communications
5 contact information corresponding to a user;

6 b. searching a database containing
7 communications information for contacting the user
8 including a user identifier, a plurality of
9 communications addresses and information corresponding
10 to the user's preferred communications options;
11 wherein the information corresponding to
12 the user's preferred communications options includes
13 information received from a personal information source
14 associated with the user; and

15 c. determining from the database a

1 95. A method of determining a communications
2 address for contacting a user, comprising the steps of:
3 a. receiving a request for communications
4 contact information corresponding to a user;
5 b. comparing a communications option
6 accompanying the request with the user's preferred
7 communications options;
8 c. determining whether there is a
9 communications address for the user corresponding to a
10 communications option having at least one communications
11 property in common with the communications option
12 accompanying the request and with the user's preferred
13 communications options;
14 d. if there is a communications address for
15 the user corresponding to a communications option having
16 at least one communications property in common with the
17 communications option accompanying the request and with
18 the user's preferred communications options, selecting
19 the communications address; and
20 e. if there is no communications address for
21 the user corresponding to a communications option having
22 at least one communications property in common with the
23 communications option accompanying the request and with
24 the user's preferred communications options, converting
25 a communication for the user into a form receivable by
26 the user over at least one of the user's preferred
27 communications options.

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4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting text portions of a facsimile message into a
6 voice message.

1 97. The method according to claim 95, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting an e-mail message into a voice message.

1 98. The method according to claim 95, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting a voice message into a facsimile message.

1 99. The method according to claim 95, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting an e-mail message into a facsimile message.

1 100. The method according to claim 95, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes
5 converting text portions of a facsimile message into an
6 e-mail message.

1 101. The method according to claim 95, wherein the
2 step of converting a communication for the user into a
3 form receivable by the user over at least one of the
4 user's preferred communications options includes

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5 converting a voice message into an e-mail message.

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